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ABSTRACT

This document offers materials for a 40-hour course aimed at helping employees read more efficiently by increasing their comprehension, retention, and test-taking skills. The course was part of a workplace literacy project developed by Mercer County Community College (New Jersey) and its partners. The document contains the following: (1) a course outline; (2) instructional directions; (3) handouts on study and test-taking tips; (4) a multiple-choice test; (5) sheets on which to record scores on reading drills; and (6) fill-in-the-blank vocabulary exercises for learners. The topics covered in the course are as follows: reading for a purpose; the "survey, question, read, recite, and review" study method; finding the main idea; understanding inference; reading and interpreting information presented in graphs, charts, and maps; interpreting printed directions; methods and strategies for test-taking; a group project to design a test; improving individuals' rate of reading; and vocabulary skills. Ten references are listed. (CML)

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ED351584

READING FOR TECHNICAL AND BUSINESS PERSONNEL

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OVERVIEW OF WORKPLACE LITERACY PROJECT
Skills for Tomorrow, NOW

The Workplace Literacy Project resulted from a Department of Education grant, plus in-kind contributions from a partnership with General Motors Inland Fisher Guide Plant, Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, and St. Francis Medical Center. The project is an attempt to find solutions to the growing "skills gap" in industry today. More than 25 million Americans cannot read the front page of a newspaper. In addition, workers whose average ages are rising, must produce in a technological environment that may not have existed when they began working. This lack of knowledge makes it difficult to compete in a technologically changing workplace. Moreover, an increasing number of immigrants have entered the workforce with limited English communication skills. In response to this growing need, the Federal government provided a grant to Mercer County Community College and its partners to develop ways to enrich and expand employees' basic workplace knowledge. The aim of the project was also to improve the self-esteem of the participants.

Support for the project was solicited from all levels of company management and the unions. In addition, an advisory council, comprising key management and employees from each company determined the design, goals, and time-frame of the project. Each company provided a liaison person from their site, and MCCC hired a director to manage the program. Employee release time for classes was site-specific.

Participation in the program was voluntary. Information about classes was disseminated through company letters, flyers, union notices, notices included with paychecks, and open forums with supervisors and employees.

The ABLE test was used for normative pre and post testing. Other types of evaluations varied from course to course. MCCC counselors met with each student to discuss present and future educational objectives.

Courses were offered in reading, business writing, math, science, and English as a Second Language. In addition, there were workshops in problem solving, stress management, and other work survival skills. The curricula for the courses were customized for each worksite to be as job focused as possible.

It is our hope that this program will serve as a model for other organizations to empower their employees with the skills needed to succeed in the changing technological workplace, today and in the future.

Technical Reading

COURSE OUTLINE

TECHNICAL READING

Course aimed at helping staff to read more efficiently through the many manuals and memos they receive. Focuses on strategies for reading that will improve comprehension and retention of material. Test-taking strategies are also discussed. (The majority of the actual reading material was taken from company manuals and materials, which cannot be reprinted.)

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- o Use SQ3R to help understand reading material
- o Read for a purpose
- o Identify the main idea of a passage
- o Understand inferences
- o Understand information presented in graphic form
- o Understand printed directions
- o Use strategies for test taking
- o Read at a faster rate
- o Use context and combining forms to interpret unfamiliar vocabulary

TOPICAL OUTLINE

- o Reading for a purpose/SQ3R
- o Finding the main idea
- o Understanding inference
- o Reading and interpreting information presented in graphs, charts, and maps
- o Interpreting printed directions
- o Methods and strategies for test taking
- o Group project - design a test
- o Improving individual rate of reading
- o Vocabulary skills

OTHER

- o 40 hours

Week #1 Reading for Purpose. Interpreting and
Organizing what you've read. "SQ3R"

- Objectives:
1. To develop an understanding of the process of reading, how the eye moves, etc., and the need to become active readers through the use of SQ3R.
 2. To understand that we read differently depending on the purpose of our reading.
 3. Compare and contrast the methods with the purpose of reading.

- Introduction:
1. Ask them as a group to examine their expectations of the course.
 2. Examine that improving reading comprehension is one of their objectives.
 3. Tell them that we will be looking at the process steps of reading.
 4. Tell them that we will learn about a reading technique which will improve their reading through them assuming a more active role.

- Development:
1. Through the use of handouts, examine the various purposes of reading.
 2. Ask them to determine the different types of reading they do, on the job, at home, etc., and to compare how they may read differently based upon the situation.
 3. Chart out SQ3R
 4. Examine their own manual, and other handouts and identify how they read, what affects the way they read, how the set up of the material, charts, numbers, technical material will affect their comprehension.
 5. Take the Able test to establish

9/17 Reading for Purpose. Interpreting and Organizing
what you have read.

SQ3R

Survey
Question
Read
Recite
Review

Survey/Preview. Give info about what you're reading before you read it

Read sentences that introduce chapter

Read main headings and subheading (boldface or italic print)

Review photos and illustrations

Questions: Produce your own questions. Identify main headings and subheadings ..Turn each heading into a question,

Reading: Read, try to find the answer to the question you've made up from the heading. This gives purpose to the reading. Stop before you continue. Answer the questions before going to the next heading. Keep repeating the process.

Recite. Recite your answers out loud, when you start SQ3R.

Look at the question you've made up from the heading

Read only from one heading to the next

Stop before going on.

Recite the answers to the questions

Review: After you read the whole selection, review your reading. Go back and read your questions & try to answer the questions.

This time, don't read the material under each heading. Try to remember what you read by thinking about each question and giving an answer. If you can't answer a particular question, reread only the material under the heading that will answer your question.

Continue to drill on exercises; use newspaper handouts as well as their manual for real applications.

Handouts:

Locating the subject, main idea...
B-1

B-2 exercises with selecting true sentences about passage, and main idea

B-3 exercises of finding the main idea

Follow-Up:

Ask for them to dissect some of their most technical reading for main ideas and supporting details.

Sources:

Lehier, pp.10 -11

Joffe, pp.93 - 99

Shepherd, pp.55-57, 63 - 66, 74 - 76, 149 - 151

Week #3

Development of Understanding of Inference --- how Point of View and Mood, Tone, etc., affect Comprehension.

Objectives:

1. To identify reading material which may contain inferential meanings.
2. Relate the reading material to their specific purpose in reading.
3. Compare/contrast inferential readings with direct statements which we already have read.

Introduction:

1. Ask them if any of the reading material they see on day to day basis is direct, with precise instructions, steps, etc. (as in manuals, guides, etc.) or if they have occasion to read material presented in other formats.
2. Point out that many messages we receive are not direct... ask for examples.
3. Ask them to reflect on what formats of reading/media may commonly use inferences.

Development:

1. Hand out editorial examples and ask them to identify the main idea of the writing and of each paragraph pointing to supporting sentences for their opinions.
2. Ask them to identify the inferential meanings of various advertisements.
3. Relate the lesson to finding the main idea in inferential reading (lesson of week #2).
4. Work in pairs to compare results and discuss our reasons for supporting our choices for answer selections to questions on handout
5. Compare reading technique to SQ3R with respect to prior knowledge, asking questions, etc.

Handout:

Follow-Up: Ask them to bring in two examples of reading

Week #4: Reading and Interpreting Information Presented in Graphs, Charts, Maps.

- Objectives:**
1. To use skills such as reading for specific details and draw conclusions/make inferences from presented information.
 2. To read for titles and subtitles.
 3. To read the key for scale, etc.
 4. To read information/details along side the bottom of the map/chart for further details.
 5. Read for purpose.

- Introduction:**
1. Ask them if any of the reading material they see during the course of the day includes information presented in visual/illustrative form.
 2. Ask them to describe how they feel they read and understand that material as compared to information presented in paragraph form.
 3. Tell them that they will be working on improving their understanding of chart, graph, map reading, and that they will be able to read it and draw conclusions from the information presented in visual form.

Development: Work on specific map, graph and chart exercises in the handouts, individually and in pairs.

Share some graphs/charts from the newspaper and ask them to state three conclusions with respect to trend, least or greatest value (in specific year), etc.
Ask them if the chart reflects the same information as in one of the articles.

Follow Up: Further work on the handouts, with them writing at least 3 meaningful conclusions about the info.

Week #5 Interpreting Printed Directions

- Objectives:
1. To relate skills presented thus far to material encountered at work.
 2. To practice critical reading skills with longer reading passages.
 3. To read for a purpose.

- Introduction:
1. Discuss types of reading material students encounter at work.
 2. Discuss how they master the technical jargon and knowledge required to perform their jobs.

- Development:
1. Use Reading Skills that Work book one pages 78-84 (Reading to Follow Instructions) together, independently, and in groups.
 2. Hand out packet of material concerning fire extinguishers and fire safety. Use SQ3R with all the material. Compare purposes of the different material. Discuss who needs each one. Discuss how thoroughly the material needs to be mastered and ways to master it.

- Follow-up:
- Use Reading Skills that Work book two pages 86-91 (Reasoning Strategies for Tasks) together, independently, and in groups.

Week #6 Methods/Strategies for Test Taking

- Objectives:**
1. To develop study strategies.
 2. To develop test taking techniques.
 3. To familiarize students with standardized test answer sheet format.

- Introduction:**
1. Discuss students' feelings about tests.
 2. Discuss types of tests they encounter at work and most common formats of these tests.
 3. Review study strategies and test taking techniques they already use or know about.

- Development.**
1. How to study
 - Focus on SQ3R system discussed in previous weeks (use handout).
 - Discuss other studying tips.
 - Discuss how tests are written.
 2. Test taking techniques
 - Go through handout on test taking tips.
 - In groups, do worksheet on working with negatives in multiple choice questions.
 - Discuss and practice using standardized test answer sheets.
 - Do worksheet that gives a practice reading passage followed by multiple choice exercises - discuss purpose of each question; choose correct answer, and discuss what is wrong with each distractor.
 3. Using an old copy of a standardized test, do several sample reading comprehension exercises. Use computer answer sheets. Discuss and analyze each question.

Follow-Up: Read article, "How to Cram" - write potential multiple choice test items to exchange with partners. Evaluate items.

Source: Smith, pp.280 - 284

Technical Reading II

Study Strategies

Study System

A. Survey (Preview)

1. Title
2. Author
3. Beginning
4. Ending
5. Headings, subheadings
6. Words in unusual type, ...

B. Question

1. What does it seem to be about?
2. What do you already know about this subject?
3. What interests you about this subject? (What do you want to know about this subject?)
4. Ask yourself some questions that might be answered in the reading. (Turn subheadings into questions.)

C. Read Actively

1. Underline or highlight main ideas, important details, and vocabulary words.
2. Compare, evaluate, question ...

D. Recite

1. This means to go over each section of the material and try to recite the important points from memory.
2. The majority of study time should be spent on this step.

E. Review (Recall)

- ***
1. Ask yourself what the reading was about.
 2. What were the important points (main ideas and supporting details) of the reading?
 - a. From memory
 - b. From what you have underlined
 3. Main idea statement - summary statement of the important points.

Technical Reading II Study Strategies

General information

- A. The purpose of this study method is to increase your comprehension and retention of the material you read and to counteract the effects of normal forgetting.
- B. How thoroughly you follow all the steps depends on the purpose of the reading.
 - 1. Leisure reading does not require this thoroughness.
 - 2. Reading for classwork requires some.
 - 3. Reading for tests or for material that is important for work would require a very thorough reading.
- C. Always ask yourself what it was about when you finish a reading.
 - 1. If you can't answer this question, you know immediately that you need to review or reread the material.
 - 2. Even if you use only this one step, your comprehension and retention of what you read should increase.

Other study tips

- A. Turn headings and subheadings into questions.
- B. Ask yourself other questions that are likely to be on a test (questions concerning main points, general facts, vocabulary, important conclusions, ...).
- C. Review material with someone else from the class (ask each other questions etc).
- D. Take breaks when you study and spread your studying over a period of time.

Week #7 Group Project - Design a Test

- Objectives**
1. To apply test taking techniques learned in previous week.
 2. To improve student confidence in testing situations.
 3. To use cooperative learning skills to make a test.
- Introduction**
1. Discuss how test writers write tests.
 2. Discuss effectiveness of how learning to write a test can help them when they need to study for a test.
- Development**
1. Use SQ3R with "Sources of Ionizing Radiation."
 2. In pairs, write, at least one multiple choice question and one true/false question covering the material in that reading. *
 3. Exchange test items - evaluate and answer questions.
 4. Analyze questions - (type, distractors, ...) - choose ten questions for a test.
 5. Teacher will write up and distribute final version of group quiz.
- Follow-up**
- Students will choose short readings and write a quiz to be taken by, evaluated, and analyzed by someone else in the class.

* These are the types of questions employees encounter on their in-house tests.

Technical Reading II

Test Taking Tips

- I. Before taking test
 - A. Get plenty of sleep the night before.
 - B. Arrive 5 - 10 minutes early and get settled.
- II. During the test
 - A. If you become anxious or distracted, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to relax and get yourself back on track.
 - B. Read and follow directions.
 - C. Schedule your time
 1. Preview the test.
 2. Answer the easiest questions first.
 3. Do not waste time on a difficult item. Mark it with a light dot or check and go back to it when you have finished the other items.
 - D. Do not be intimidated by students who finish early.
- III. Reading Passages
 - A. Read first, then answer the questions.
 - B. Be sure to ask yourself what the passage was about before trying to answer the questions.
 - C. Check your answers in the passage.
- IV. Essay Questions
 - A. Write a brief outline before writing the answer.
 1. Helps you organize your thoughts.
 2. Results in a more focused essay.
 - B. Be sure to answer the question that was asked.
- V. Multiple Choice
 - A. Consider all alternatives before choosing an answer.
 - B. Anticipate the answer and look for something close to it.
 - C. Avoid answers with 100 percent words (all, every, none,)
 - D. Avoid overanalyzing.
 - E. When in doubt, use the process of elimination, and then take an educated guess.
- VI. True/False

Technical Reading II
Group Test

"Sources of Ionizing Radiation"

In the space provided, write T if the statement is true, F if it is false.

- T 1. In terms of radiation exposure, it is safer to work at PPPL than at home.
- F 2. The average smoker receives less radiation in one year than a PPPL employee.
- F 3. You will receive less radiation from a year's worth of medical x-rays than from internal sources of background radiation.
- T 4. Radiation exposure to a smoker's lungs from tobacco is approximately 16,000 millirems in one year.
- T 5. People are exposed to radiation on a daily basis.
- T 6. Tobacco is a source of radiation.
- F 7. Background radiation is mostly from terrestrial sources.
- (CT) X 8. People in Los Angeles receive the highest dose of background radiation in the United States.
- T 9. NJ background radiation exposure is approximately 80 mrems per year not including radon exposure.

In the space provided write the letter of the best answer to each question.

- needs to be reworded*
- d 1. Which of the following is the most common source of radiation people are exposed to every day?
- a. sun and stars
 - b. potassium-40
 - c. uranium
 - d. radon
- b 2. Which of the following is the average dose of radiation a smoker receives each year?
- a. 365 millirems
 - b. 16,000 millirems
 - c. 1,000 millirems
 - d. 1,280 millirems

Technical Reading II
Group Test

- d 3. Natural background sources contribute approximately _____% of all radiation exposure for a typical person in the United States.
- a. 20%
 - b. 66%
 - c. 79%
 - d. 82%
- C 4. Man-made radiation is _____% of the total exposure to radiation a typical person in the United States receives.
- a. 8%
 - b. 11%
 - c. 18%
 - d. 55%
- d 5. Cosmic radiation comes from
- a. comic book ink.
 - b. underground gases.
 - c. shellfish.
 - d. the sun and other stars.
- C 6. Radon delivers approximately what percentage of total radiation exposure to the average person living in the United States in a year?
- a. 5%
 - b. 25%
 - c. 55%
 - d. 75%
- C 7. People are exposed to radiation
- a. only if they work in a nuclear power plant.
 - b. only if they live in certain areas.
 - c. everyday.
 - d. never.
- d 8. Which of the following is a source of radiation?
- a. the sun
 - b. tobacco
 - c. our bodies
 - d. all of the above
- a 9. A smoker receives a whole body exposure just from tobacco of 1,280 millirems for a one year period. PPPL limits are 1,000 millirems. What are the limits per year per source in rem units?
- a. 1.28 and 1
 - b. 2.8 and 10
 - c. 120 and 100
 - d. 128 and 1

Technical Reading II
Group Test

7. a 10. Radon contains _____% of the total dose of naturally occurring background radiation?
- a. 55%
 - b. 60%
 - c. 75%
 - d. 82%
- c 11. Radon gas is generated from
- a. rocks and soil.
 - b. naturally occurring radionuclides.
 - c. decaying uranium.
 - d. the sun and other stars.
- a 12. From which source of radiation does an average person receive the most exposure?
- a. radon
 - b. nuclear power
 - c. cosmic
 - d. internal

Week 8 Improving Individual Rate of Reading

- Objectives
1. To focus on the concept of reading flexibility
 2. To improve reading speed
 3. To discuss techniques of skimming and scanning
- Introduction
1. Ask students if they feel the need to improve their reading speed.
 2. Discuss need for adjusting reading rate to the type of material and purpose for reading.
- Development
1. Discuss causes of slow speed - ways to improve speed.
 2. Using packet of material, get a base line reading speed for each student.
 3. Continue to work on speed - charting speed and comprehension scores with practice exercises.
(Comprehension scores should be about 60-70% when focusing on speed.)
 4. Discuss when and how to skim and/or scan. Do practice exercises for skimming and scanning.
- Follow-up
- Second packet of reading drills to be charted for speed and comprehension.
- Sources:
- Smith, p.220
Langan, pp.415 - 429
Fry, pp.62 - 64, 78 - 80, 88 - 90,
114 - 116, 161 - 163, 171 - 173

MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

READING DRILLS

SET #: _____

READABILITY LEVEL: _____

COMPREHENSION:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

VOCABULARY:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

MAZE:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

READING TIME: _____

W/P/M: _____

AVE. SCORE: _____

SET #: _____

READABILITY LEVEL: _____

COMPREHENSION:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

VOCABULARY:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

MAZE:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

READING TIME: _____

W/P/M: _____

AVE. SCORE: _____

SET #: _____

READABILITY LEVEL: _____

COMPREHENSION:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

VOCABULARY:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

MAZE:

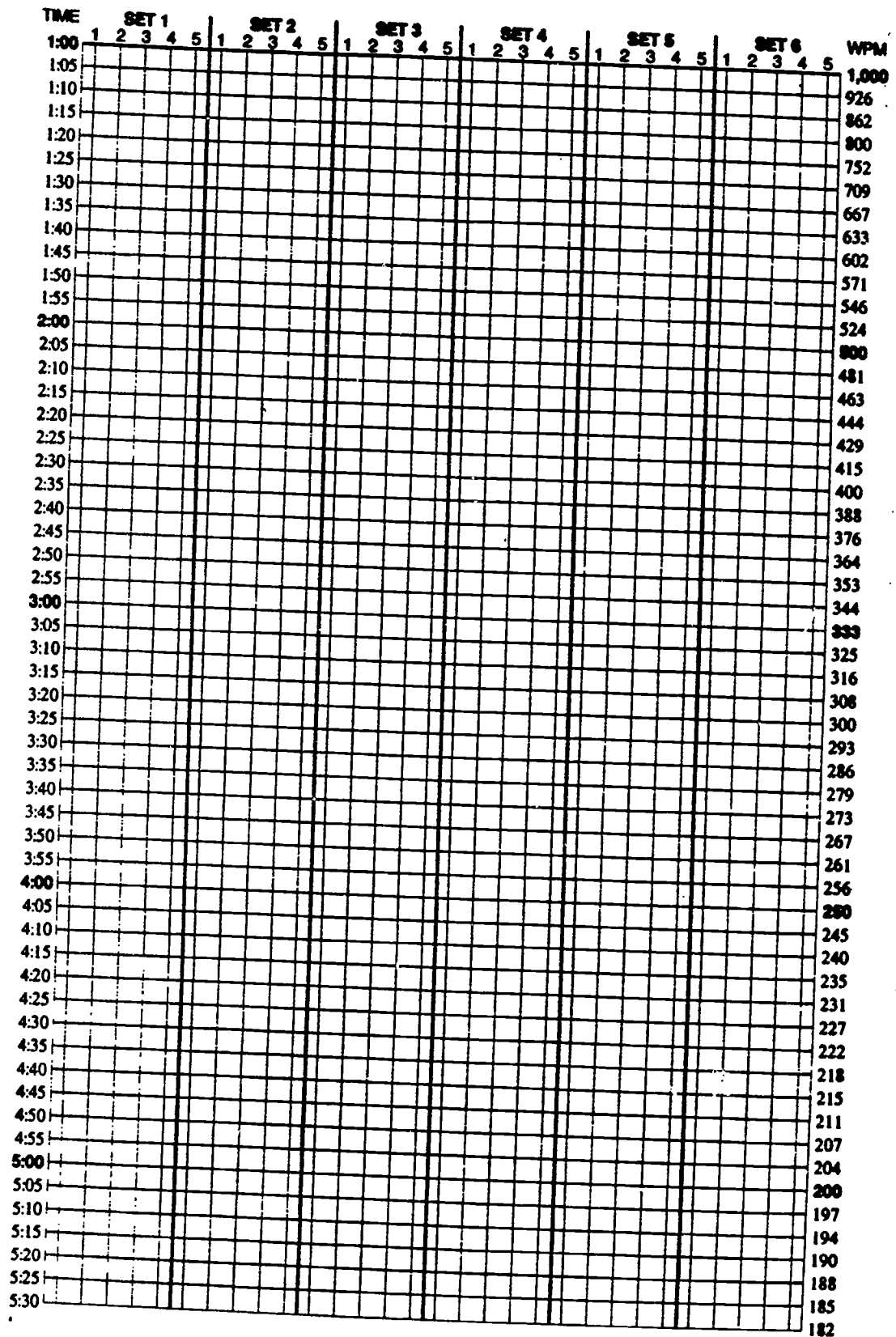
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

READING TIME: _____

W/P/M: _____

AVE. SCORE: _____

Reading Rate



Week #9 Vocabulary Skills

Objectives To develop vocabulary in context skills.
To discuss how word parts, especially combined with context skills, can help students analyze word meaning.
To learn when to use a glossary or the dictionary.

Introduction 1. Ask students what they do when they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary - at work and in leisure reading.
2. To introduce vocabulary in context skills, write the following sentences on the board:

The arnspach crept through the forest in search of food. The monkeys, however, were safely nested in the treetops.

Ask students to list as much information as they can about an arnspach just by using the information given in the two sentences. Then tell them that arnspach is really a made up word. Discuss how context clues enabled them to figure out characteristics of the arnspach. Discuss type of context clues they used.

3. To introduce word parts, write the following word on the board:

pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis

Break down the word into its parts. Discuss with the students how much you can learn about a word by being able to identify roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

Development 1. Give examples of context clues (definition, elaborating details, examples, comparison, contrast).
2. Go through the handouts on context clues.
3. Work through examples of word families, roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
4. Do the handout on word parts.
5. Discuss when to use a glossary and when to use a dictionary.

Follow up Using material the students encounter at work, figure out the meaning of five words.

Sources: Smith, p.95
Joffe, pp.85 - 86
Niles, pp.13, 16 - 17
Langan, pp.489 - 490

Directions: Below are some commonly used prefixes and their meanings. Study them carefully. Then fill in the blanks in the numbered exercises. The first one has been done for you.

Prefix	Meanings	Prefix	Meaning
anti	against	dis	not, no longer
auto	self	eu	good, nice
bi	two	ex	out, not now
de	away, undo	hetero	different

1. If a newspaper is printed bimonthly, it is printed twice a month
2. Change the word enchanted to mean no longer enchanted. _____
3. If gen refers to types or kinds, what does heterogeneous mean? _____
4. If sect means to cut or divide, what does bisect mean? _____
5. What is an antimissile missile? _____

DRILL C-3

Directions: fill in the blanks as in the previous drill.

Prefix	Meanings	Prefix	Meaning
ex	out, away	pre	before
inter	between, among	re	back, again
intra	within	sub	under
mis, miso	wrong, hatred	super	above
post	after	trans	across

1. If import means to bring in export means _____
2. International relations are dealings _____ nations.
3. If urban refers to the city, what is an intraurban truck line? _____
4. Is postgraduate work done before or after you graduate from college? _____
5. A prefix is called what it is because it is fixed _____ the root word.
6. Since marine refers to water, a ship that can travel under water is called a _____
7. A transatlantic voyage would take you _____

8. Intercollegiate sports are sport activities that take place _____ different colleges.
9. Intracollegiate sports are sport activities that take place _____
10. Since gam refers to marriage, misogamy means _____
11. Since gyn refers to women, a misogynist is _____
12. Is the post-Victorian period before or after the Victorian period? _____
13. When we write P.S. after completing a letter, we are adding a _____ script.
14. Is the pre-Victorian period before or after the Victorian period? _____
15. Who is higher in rank, a subprincipal or a principal? _____

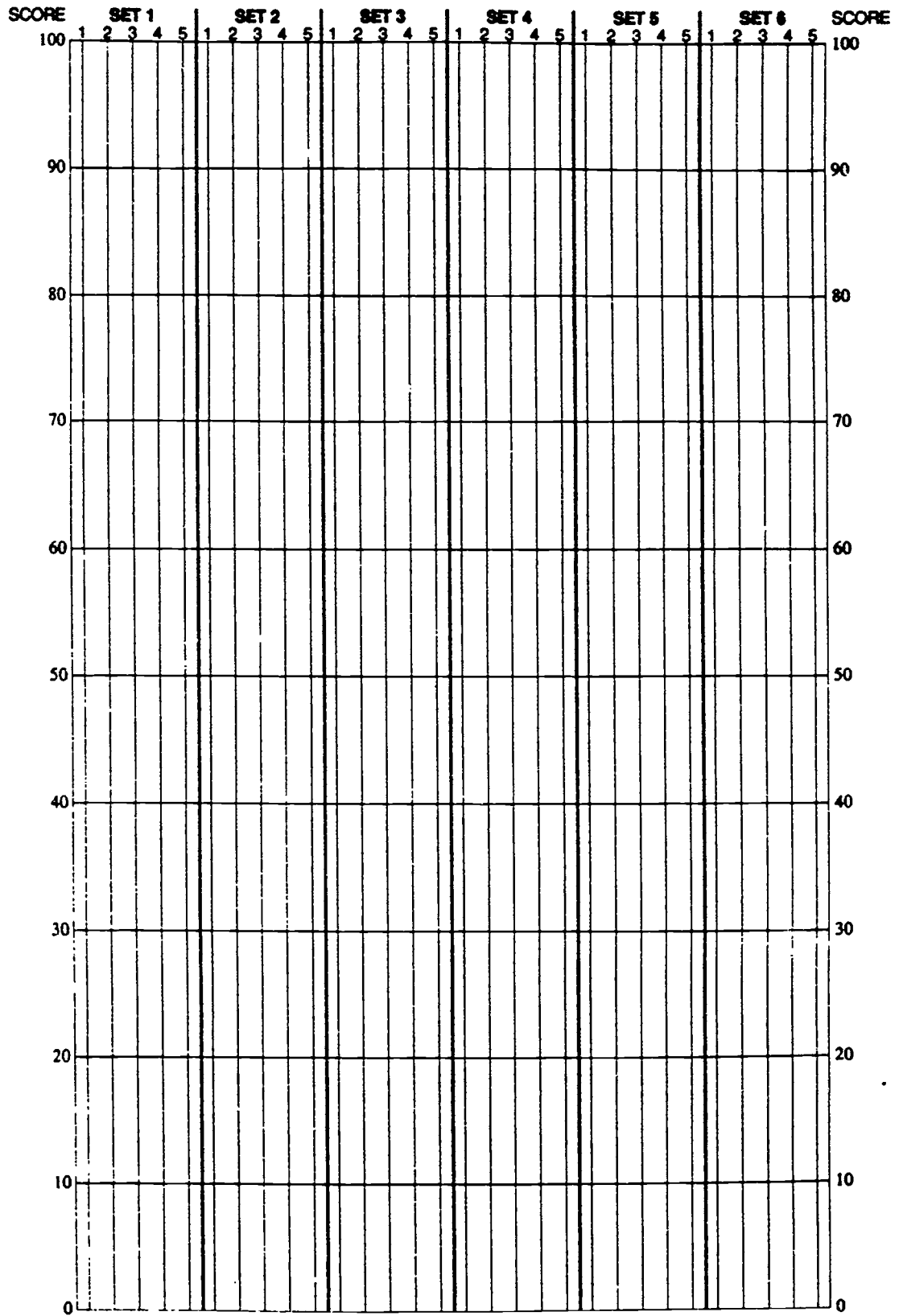
DRILL C-5

Directions: Using the list of word roots below and their definitions, answer the questions that follow.

Root	Definition	Root	Definition
aud	hear	graph	write, record
chron	time	man, manu	hand
cred	belief	mort	death
dent	tooth	phil	love
dict	tell, say	phon	sound

1. If meter means measure, a chronometer _____.
2. If something is audible, you can _____ it.
3. Incredulous means _____.
4. The suffix ist refers to a person; that's why someone who works on your teeth is called a _____.
5. If contra means against or opposite, contradict means _____.
6. The opposite of automatic is _____.
7. Does a postmortem occur before or after death? _____.

Comprehension



MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC SKILLS

READING DRILLS

SET #: _____

READABILITY LEVEL: _____

COMPREHENSION:

VOCABULARY:

MAZE:

READING TIME: _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
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6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

W/P/M: _____

AVE. SCORE: _____

SET #: _____

READABILITY LEVEL: _____

COMPREHENSION:

VOCABULARY:

MAZE:

READING TIME: _____

1. _____
2. _____
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W/P/M: _____

AVE. SCORE: _____

SET #: _____

READABILITY LEVEL: _____

COMPREHENSION:

VOCABULARY:

MAZE:

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W/P/M: _____

AVE. SCORE: _____